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Case of plague at Shidzuoka.

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN, May 7, 1900.

SIR: Since closing my letter of to-day I have received dispatch announcing the occurrence of a case of plague at the town of Shidzuoka, on the trunk railway between Osaka, Yokohama, and Tokyo, and about 120 miles from this port. No details are given as to the case. Antembarkation quarantine will be at once extended to all passengers from Shidzuoka and the district between that point and Osaka.

Respectfully,

STUART ELDRIDGE, M. D.,

Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

The SURGEON-GENERAL,

U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN, May 7, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that since May 2, the date of my last letter, 3 more fatal cases of plague have been reported from Osaka—2 deaths occurring on May 3 and 1 on May 4—making a total of 11 cases since the reappearance of the malady on April 8. The latest case is noted as exceptionally malignant, proving mortal within twenty-four hours from the first seizure. So far all the cases have been confined to one district of the city.

I regret to say that no very active measures of general sanitation seem to be in progress in either Tokyo or Yokohama, such as were enforced at the time of the first outbreak last winter. In Tokyo this seems to be partly due to the fact that the cleansing of the city is entrusted to no special department or responsible official. In this connection the following extract from the Japan Times, a semiofficial journal, of date April 29, may be of interest:

SCAVENGING QUESTION.

Everywhere you go in the city you find the drains choked up in the street sides and garbage lying in heaps in the back yards, sending forth an awful stench, which means scattering broadcast all kinds of disease germs. No wonder the papers are loudly calling on the city to do something. Whose is the fault? The city's? Yes, the city's; and that is just where the trouble is, for nobody knows which official to single out and saddle with the responsibility—in fact, there is no such official to be found in the city office. The blame is in the system under which the scavenging work is carried out, and that system is all wrong. Next to the police, the sanitary is the most important department of administration in a large and densely populated city, and not the least important work in connection with this department is that of scavenging, the neglect of which is apt to endanger the lives of an untold number of members of the community. Hence a city the size of Tokyo should have an independent and efficiently organized bureau for scavenging work, superintended by a responsible chief officer, with a respectable salary, for his task is an arduous one. The wonder is that Tokyo has not adopted this arrangement long ago. At all events it has an object lesson before it now, for an insignificant subbureau which makes it its practice to give out the work on contract should no longer be intrusted with this all-important business.

Respectfully,

STUART ELDRIDGE, M. D.,

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